

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 04047 121105Z

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E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: FAO, EAGR

SUBJ: EXPERT CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATION TO FAO ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

REF: STATE 48014

SUMMARY: EXPERTS' REPORT (REFTEL) CRITICIZING FAO FOR INADEQUATE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LOT OF POOR MAJORITY IS LIKELY TO BE SUBJECT OF POLICY AND BUREAUCRATIC CONTROVERSY IN FAO, IN VIEW OF NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA'S NARROW FOCUS ON PROGRAM OF INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. EXPERTS' REPORTS ARE HANDLED WITHIN FAO, AND U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD MOST APPROPRIATELY ADDRESS SUCH ISSUES OF INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT OF DIRECTOR GENERAL'S NEW PROGRAM, WHICH HE WILL PRESENT TO PROGRAM AND FINANCE COMMITTEES IN MAY, AND TO FAO COUNCIL IN JULY. WASHINGTON AGENCIES SHOULD BEGIN TO PREPARE POSITION PAPERS ON THESE QUESTIONS AS OUTLINE OF HIS PROGRAM IS REVEALED. IN INTERIM, WE BELIEVE U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONTINUE GENERALLY TO ENCOURAGE INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION PROGRAMS OF FAO IN BROADER FRAMEWORK OF ECONOMIC-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, WITHOUT MAKING SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THIS PARTICULAR EXPERTS' REPORT.

1. PROCEDURALLY THIS REPORT IS MERELY ONE OF DOZENS OF SUCH

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PAGE 02 ROME 04047 121105Z

REPORTS WRITTEN YEARLY BY GROUPS OF EXPERTS SERVING IN INDIVIDUAL

CAPACITY. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE'S OFFICE IS NOT INVOLVED IN SUCH PROJECTS AT THE TIME, NOR IS IT USUALLY ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE REPORTS AFTERWARDS. FAO DECIDES WHAT TO DO WITH THEM, AND IN THIS CASE THERE MAY BE POLICY AND BUREAUCRATIC CONTROVERSY ABOUT IT.

2. WE KNOW THAT NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA IS SINGLE-MINDEDLY FOCUSED ON STRENGTHENING FIELD PROGRAM AND INVESTMENT PROCESS, AND THAT HE IS SKEPTICAL AND EVEN ANTIPATHETIC TOWARD ECONOMIC-SOCIAL POLICIES OF FAO'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY DEPARTMENT, A DEPARTMENT WHICH IS RUMORED TO RECEIVE HEAVY PERSONNEL CUTS WHEN DIRECTOR-GENERAL FINALLY MAKES HIS PROGRAM CHANGES. EXPERTS' REPORT IN QUESTION WAS PREPARED UNDER LEADERSHIP OF DR. H. KOTTER, DIRECTOR OF FAO'S HUMAN RESOURCES, INSTITUTIONS AND AGRARIAN REFORM DIVISION, A GERMAN SOCIOLOGY PROFESSOR WHOSE REPUTATION FOR EFFECTIVENESS IS NOT GOOD IN FAO AND WHO IS RETIRING SHORTLY. REPORT'S SHARP CRITICISM SMACKS OF BUREAUCRATIC AND POLICY ATTACK ON NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHOSE STRONG SENSE OF AUTHORITY GIVES LITTLE PROSPECT FOR ACCEPTANCE OF REPORT.

3. POLICY QUESTION RAISED BY EXPERTS' REPORT FOR UNITED STATES IS NOT SIMPLE ONE OF WHETHER OR NOT WE FAVOR BETTERING LOT OF POOR MAJORITY - WHICH OF COURSE WE DO. EXPERTS' REPORT RAISES COMPLEX ISSUES OF, A) WHETHER WE WISH TO DIVERT SAOUMA FROM HIS OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, B) EXTENT TO WHICH FAO AS OPPOSED TO OTHER AGENCIES SHOULD SERVE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR ECONOMIC BETTERMENT OF POOR MAJORITY, AND C) QUESTION OF HOW TO FORMULATE SOUND DOCTRINE AND PROGRAMS OF ECONOMIC-SOCIAL REFORM IN FAO CONFERENCES AND FAO SECRETARIAT.

4. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE'S VIEW IS THAT INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, ESPECIALLY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, SHOULD BE PRIMARY FAO OBJECTIVE, IN KEEPING WITH WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE'S FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. WE SHOULD NOT OPPOSE SAOUMA IN HIS FOCUS ON THIS. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT OF THE POOR MAJORITY IS NOT IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE -- OF ITSELF AND AS CONCOMITANT ESSENTIAL OF INCREASING PRODUCTION. AS U.S. REPRESENTATIVE UNDERSTANDS IT, U.S. PHILOSOPHY IS ONE OF INTEGRATING ECONOMIC-SOCIAL REFORM INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING. TROUBLE WITH THIS EXPERTS' REPORT IS THAT INSTEAD OF INTEGRATING ECONOMIC-SOCIAL

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PAGE 03 ROME 04047 121105Z

REFORM INTO PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, IT SEEMS TO SET TWO OBJECTIVES IN CONFLICT AND TO SUBORDINATE INCREASED PRODUCTION TO ECONOMIC-SOCIAL BETTERMENT OF POOR. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE ALSO FEARS THAT IN FAO COUNCIL AND CONFERENCE MEETINGS RADICAL GROUP 77 ELEMENTS AND SOCIALIST BLOC MIGHT GIVE INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT DOCTRINAIRE AND RADICAL SLANT WHICH WE WOULD NOT FAVOR, AND WHICH COULD IMPAIR MAIN FAO ACTIVITIES. AS HE UNDERSTANDS IT, THIS LAST CONSIDERATION WAS MAIN FACTOR IN

U.S. RESERVED ATTITUDE TOWARD WORLD LAND REFORM CONFERENCE CONSIDERED IN FAO COUNCIL MEETINGS IN 1975.

5. IDEALLY, IN U.S. REPRESENTATIVE'S VIEW, BEST MEANS OF INFLUENCING FAO TOWARDS SOUND POLICIES OF INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN FAO WOULD BE TO REPLACE KOTTER AND SOME OF HIS STAFF WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE BROAD AGRICULTURAL AS WELL AS SOCIOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE, AND COULD TIE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC REFORM INTO MAIN FAO PROGRAMS EFFECTIVELY. U.S. HAS TWO GOOD CANDIDATES TO REPLACE KOTTER, BUT THERE ARE OTHER CANDIDATES AS WELL, AND IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL WILL USE THIS DIVISION.

6. AS FOR THIS EXPERTS' REPORT, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE RECOMMENDS THAT WE WAIT AND SEE NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL'S PROGRAM WHICH HE WILL PRESENT TO PROGRAM AND FINANCE COMMITTEES IN MAY AND TO FAO COUNCIL IN JULY. DIRECTOR GENERAL IS HIGHLY SENSITIVE ABOUT HIS STAFF'S BRINGING COUNTRY PRESSURE TO PLEAD SPECIAL CAUSES. INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUE WILL REALLY ARISE IN FAO COUNCIL'S ACTION IN JULY ON DIRECTOR GENERAL'S NEW PROGRAM, FOR WHICH WASHINGTON WILL SOON BEGIN PREPARING POSITION PAPERS. IN INTERIM, SUGGEST U.S. GOVERNMENT CONTINUE GENERALLY TO FAVOR BROAD DEVELOPMENT ASSISTING POOREST AS PART OF FAO PROGRAMS, WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSING ITSELF TO THIS EXPERTS' REPORT. VOLPE

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